



**BOZRAH VOLUNTEER  
FIRE COMPANY, INC.**

**50 YEARS OF FIRE HISTORY  
1950 - 2000**



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1950-2000  
Bozrah Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.

1951 No official alarm records found. ~ Chief John Lynch

May 15, 1951 President and First Selectman Lawrence Gilman reports that the company will officially start operating. "From now on when the siren blows, it won't be practice."

1952 No official alarm records found. ~ Chief John Lynch

Martinez Residence - Old Route 2 (Fitchville Rd.) - Garage Fire

1923 Mack ~ Bozrah's only piece of apparatus.

While working the fire, the Mack backfired, shot out a huge ball of flame, which started a grass fire, and stalled. Chief Lynch called, on the phone, for mutual aid from Yantic. Attention turned from fighting the garage fire to the grass fire, which quickly moved toward the engine. The old Mack would not restart, therefore water could not be pumped and by the time Yantic arrived, the garage was lost, however the Mack was saved.

1953 No official alarm records found. ~ Chief Dave Mathewson

Taylor Farm - Wawecus Hill Road - Barn Fire

1923 Mack ~ Bozrah's only piece of apparatus.

A large barn filled with hay and a number of horses was found fully involved. Yantic and East Great Plain were called in for mutual aid. Water was shuttled from Route 82 to the scene. The 1923 Mack was quite unreliable and broke down in the middle of the road, blocking all traffic including the tankers shuttling water. Chief Dave Mathewson and firefighter John Gural crawled under the truck and started working on it. After some major repairs the Mack was able to move and shuttling continued. The barn was a complete loss. Many men spent the night on the scene to wet down the area. To this day many of the men present can recall the stench of burning horseflesh.

1954 No official alarm records found. ~ Chief Ray Perkins

1955 Total Alarms: 27 ~ Chief John Beswick

April 21<sup>st</sup> - Goulart Farm - Old Route 2(Fitchville Rd) - Barn Fire

1954 Chevy ~ Bozrah's only piece of apparatus.

A large portion of a huge barn filled with hay and cows was found fully involved. Mutual aid was called in from all surrounding towns. Portable pumps were used and water was shuttled from the pond near the Moose Lodge. Several firefighters were injured but serious injuries were averted. This was another all-nighter for many of the men. The smell of burning cows is remembered to this day by those who were present.

1956 Total Alarms: 22 ~ Chief John Beswick

July 10<sup>th</sup> - Mutual Aid to Yantic - McClellan Avenue - Structure Fire

1939 International Responded

Many spectators had parked their cars and gathered near the scene of the fire. It was impossible for the engine to squeeze through. Norwich Police attempted to have cars moved; however they were unsuccessful. They then instructed the Fire Company to proceed through the area. The running boards of the International extended about a foot off the side of the truck, and as they drove through all that could be heard for blocks was the sound of metal on metal. At least 30 cars were destroyed that evening.

1957 Total Alarms: 47 ~ Chief Dave Mathewson

NO major fires.

1958 Total Alarms: 23 ~ Chief Dave Mathewson

January 25<sup>th</sup> - Franklin Residence - Caroline Road - Structure Fire  
Limited Damage

January 27<sup>th</sup> - Faulkner Residence - South Road - Structure Fire  
Upon arrival, all entrances to the house were found barricaded and entry had to be forced. Considerable damage was done, however the structure was saved. After investigation, it was found to be arson.  
May, June, July, September, and November - NO alarms.

1959 Total Alarms: 36 ~ Chief Dave Mathewson

No major alarms in town. A lot of mutual aid was given to Lebanon, Franklin and Yantic for various types of fires.

1960 Total Alarms: 17 ~ Chief Dave Mathewson

November - Beebe Farm - Stockhouse Road - Barn and Shed Fire  
After a lengthy fight, the barn was saved, however the shed was a total loss.

1961 Total Alarms: 20 ~ Chief Dave Mathewson

In the months of July, August and September there were NO alarms!

1962 Total Alarms: 37 ~ Chief Dave Mathewson

July - NO alarms.

October 26<sup>th</sup> - Murray Residence, Elaine Street - Structure Fire

A small structure fire, caused by a pot left on the stove, caused minimal damage.

November - NO alarms.

1963 Total Alarms: 53 ~ Chief Ralph Banning

January 1<sup>st</sup> - New Years Day- 1:30 AM - Ariewitz Farm, Rte 163 (Bozrah Street) - Chicken Coop Fire

The year started off with a full-blown structure fire. Most members were ringing in the New Year at Chief Ralph Bannings' house. Upon arrival a fully involved, round chicken coop was found. The temperature was so cold that the ice had to be chopped to get water and many firefighters could be seen wearing icicles. The coop was a total loss.

June - Schaler Residence - Route 163(Bozrah Street) - Possible Drowning

A man fixing a boat anchor was struck in the head and fell into the water. This is the first time that the company worked with the Connecticut State Police Dive Team.

1964 Total Alarms: 37 ~ Chief Ralph Banning

November 29<sup>th</sup> - Bear Hill Area - Search

A plane was reported down and missing. After an extensive search of the area nothing was found.

1965 Total Alarms: 41 ~ Chief Ralph Banning

March 16<sup>th</sup> - Nowakowski Residence - Route 82(Salem Turnpike) - Barn Fire

East Great Plain and Gardner Lake were called in for mutual aid.

Through out the year there were also numerous fires at the town dump.



1966 Total Alarms: 59 ~ Chief Ralph Banning

February 21<sup>st</sup> - Hirsch Residence - Route 163(Bozrah Street) -  
Structure Fire

An employee set fire to his one room house; it was a total loss.

1967 Total Alarms: 43 ~ Chief Ralph Banning

April 28<sup>th</sup> - White Residence - Wawecus Hill Road - Structure Fire

A fully involved house was found. The building was a total loss.

November 13<sup>th</sup> - Moore Residence - Bishop Road - Barn Fire

Approximately 25 chickens were lost as well as numerous pieces of  
machinery. However, firefighters were able to save one cow.

1968 Total Alarms: 52 ~ Chief Ray Barber

March 17<sup>th</sup> - Prospect Convalescent Home - Old Route 2(Fitchville Road)  
- Structure Fire

Upon arrival, 11:00PM, firefighters found an unoccupied, fully involved  
structure. Mutual aid was called in from Yantic, Lebanon and Franklin.  
The building was a total loss.

August and September NO alarms

1969 Total Alarms: 42 ~ Chief Ray Barber

August 17<sup>th</sup> thru 21<sup>st</sup> - Wirthmore Grain - Stockhouse Road - Grain  
Shed Fire

A 75 x 200-foot shed used as a feed storage building was found fully  
involved. The fire was believed to have started in a train freight car.  
The building was a complete loss, but surrounding buildings were saved.  
Mutual aid was called in from Yantic. Firefighters were on the scene  
for 10 ½ hours that evening and for several days afterwards.

November 16<sup>th</sup> Gillis Farm - Route 163(Bozrah Street) - Chicken Coop  
Fire

Mutual aid was received from Oakdale and Gardner Lake. More than ½  
of the coop was saved that evening.

1970 Total Alarms: 44 ~ Chief Ray Barber

March 19<sup>th</sup> - Mutual Aid to Franklin - Kahn's Farm - Route 32 & 207 -  
Barn Fire

Also responding to this fire were the following towns; Lebanon, south Windham, Yantic, Baltic, and Franklin.

**1971 Total Alarms: 61 ~ Chief Ray Barber**

January 20<sup>th</sup> - Januszewski Residence - Stockhouse Road - Structure Fire

The house was saved with some damage throughout.

August 4<sup>th</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup> - The Stockhouse - Stockhouse Road - Shed Fire  
Three large storage sheds were consumed in flames at the old Palmer Mill site. This was a two-day affair with mutual aid from Yantic, Franklin, Lebanon, East Great Plain, Baltic, and Colchester. Four firemen from East Great Plain escaped serious injury when a wall collapsed onto them. The shed was a total loss.

December NO Alarms

**1972 Total Alarms: 57 ~ Chief Ray Barber**

May 31<sup>st</sup> - Rytman Grain Company - Stockhouse Road - Shed Fire

A 4-story, 800-foot stockhouse burned throughout the night. Mutual aid was received from Yantic, Baltic, Franklin, East Great Plain and Lebanon.

July 9<sup>th</sup> - Main Palmer Brothers Mill - Stockhouse Road - Mill Fire  
For over 12 hours firemen from Bozrah, Yantic, East Great Plain, Oakdale, Franklin, South Windham, Baltic, Lebanon, and Colchester battled the fire in the historic old mill.

**1973 Total Alarms: 47 ~ Chief Ray Barber**

June 1<sup>st</sup> - Murphy Residence - Bashon Hill Road - Structure Fire

Upon arrival a vacant house was found fully involved. The building was a total loss.

**1974 Total Alarms: 50 ~ Chief Ray Barber**

January 2<sup>nd</sup> - Fields Memorial School - Bozrah Street Extension - Bomb Threat

On the first day back to school after vacation, a bomb threat was received. After an extensive search of the building, nothing was found and school resumed.

March 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> - Town Dump - Route 163(Bozrah Street) - Plastic Fire

On these three occasions a large amount of plastic scraps from the Gilman Corporation burned. These fires had to be put out with a bulldozer and a large amount of dirt.

**1975 Total Alarms: 70 ~ Chief Ray Barber**

April - Congregational Church - Route 163(Bozrah Street) - Internal Alarms

Numerous visits to the church were made, however no problems were ever found.

**1976 Total Alarms: 77 ~ Chief Ray Barber**

February 9<sup>th</sup> - Mutual aid to Yantic - My Brother's Place Restaurant - Structure Fire - Major Damage

February 15<sup>th</sup> - Montessi Residence - Bishop Road - Structure Fire - Major damage to the structure.

**1977 Total Alarms: 108 ~ Chief Ray Barber**

This was the year for mutual aid. In January the company responded to six major structure fires in 16 days. Three were mutual aid to East Great Plain, Lebanon and Franklin, respectively. Three were in town.

August 5<sup>th</sup> - Glenside Farm - Route 163 (Bozrah Street) - Barn Fire  
After being struck by lightening the barn, full of baled hay, became fully engulfed in flames. Oakdale, Yantic, & Gardner Lake provided mutual aid.

**1978 Total Alarms: 120 ~ Chief Ray Barber**

January 14<sup>th</sup> - Kofkoff Egg Farm - Schwartz Road - Roof Collapse

January 26<sup>th</sup> - Fields Memorial School - Bozrah Street Extension - Flood Detail

After a large amount of rain, severe flooding occurred and the area surrounding the school had to be sand bagged. A substantial amount of cellar pumping was also done.

February 6<sup>th</sup> - Nagel Residence - Cedar Lane - Structure Fire

A large amount of damage was done to the recreation room of the home.

December 22<sup>nd</sup> - Fenturas Restaurant - Route 82(Salem Turnpike) - Explosion

One person was hurt when a gas explosion occurred in the kitchen of the restaurant.

1979 Total Alarms: 126 ~ Chief Ray Barber

February 16<sup>th</sup> - LeVallee Residence - Route 163(Bozrah Street) - Garage Fire

June thru December a large amount of mutual aid was given to surrounding towns for various fires.

1980 Total Alarms: 150 ~ Chief Don Casavant

February 9<sup>th</sup> - Lambert Residence - Scott Hill Road - Structure/Debris Fire

A large amount of outside debris as well as a nearby shed and part of the residence burned. Two suspects were apprehended for arson.

Mutual aid from Gardner Lake was received.

December 25<sup>th</sup> - Tractor Parts Unlimited - Goshen Road - Structure Fire

Buildings as well as numerous pieces of machinery were lost. Mutual aid was received from Yantic, Gardner Lake, Salem and Franklin.

1981 Total Alarms: 170 ~ Chief Don Casavant

January 10<sup>th</sup> - Dump Fire - Caroline Road - Debris Fire

A large amount of debris burned for over 5 hours. Mutual aid was received from Gardener Lake.

January 11<sup>th</sup> - United Paper and Metal - Stockhouse Road - Trailer Fire

Upon arrival two paper trailers were found fully involved. Yantic, Franklin and Colchester provided mutual aid.

November 30<sup>th</sup> - Grange Hall - Scott Hill Road - Structure Fire

An unoccupied meeting hall was found fully involved. The structure sustained severe damage. Yantic and Gardner Lake gave mutual aid.

1982 Total Alarms: 129 ~ Chief Don Casavant

April 3<sup>rd</sup> - Marty Gilman Corporation - Gilman Road - Structure Fire

Upon arrival a fully involved commercial building was found. Major damage to the structure. Colchester, Salem, Franklin, Lebanon, Yantic, and Baltic provided mutual aid.

May - Slowinski Residence - Route 163 (Bozrah Street) - Structure Fire  
Bozrah's first fatal fire.

1983 Total Alarms: 152 ~ Chief Don Casavant

August 15<sup>th</sup> - Korenkiewicz Residence - Gifford Lane - Barn Fire

The barn was lost. Yantic and Franklin provided mutual aid.  
August 22<sup>nd</sup> - Savitsky Residence - Fitchville Road - Structure Fire  
The residence sustained moderate damage. Colchester and Yantic provided the mutual aid.

1984 Total Alarms: 135 ~ Chief Don Casavant

June 20<sup>th</sup> - Bozrah Town Garage - Fitchville Road - Explosion/Fire  
A workman ignited gasoline fumes when working with a torch. Minimal damage done to the building.

1985 Total Alarms: 184 ~ Chief Don Casavant

May 7<sup>th</sup> - Sheffield Residence - Goldmine Road - Structure Fire  
Upon arrival a fully involved single story house was found evacuated. Substantial damage to the building left it uninhabitable. Two firefighters received minor injuries. Mutual aid was provided by East Great Plain, Mohegan, Gardner Lake and Yantic.

August 17<sup>th</sup> - Landfill - Caroline Road - Tire Fire  
During the annual Pig Roast, a tire fire broke out at the landfill. It took over 8 hours and mutual aid from Yantic, Salem and Gardner Lake in order to extinguish the blaze.

1986 Total Alarms: 177 ~ Chief Don Casavant

November 7<sup>th</sup> - Kofkoff Egg Farm - Schwartz Road - Truck Fire  
A grain truck, parked close to the chicken coop, ignited. Mutual aid was received from Yantic. The truck was a complete loss and the coop was unharmed.

1987 Total Alarms: 197 ~ Chief Arnauld Semmelrock

July 11<sup>th</sup> - Fitchville Pond - Bozrah Street Extension - Overturned Boat  
A boat was reported overturned and a man was missing. Assistance was called in from the Connecticut State Police Dive Team, Yantic, Gardner Lake, and East Great Plain. After an extensive search the victim's body was discovered.

1988 Total Alarms: 170 ~ Chief Arnauld Semmelrock

April 8<sup>th</sup> - Gager Homestead - Gager Road - Structure Fire  
Smoke was found rolling out of the 2- $\frac{1}{2}$  story structure upon arrival. As firefighters made their attack on the fire, a woman was discovered in

the attic. Investigation revealed that the cause of the fire was arson and that the woman had shot herself. Substantial damage was done to the residence.

July 4<sup>th</sup> - Route 2 West Bound - Car Accident/Fire

One car into the bridge abutment fully involved with entrapment.

Rescue attempts were unsuccessful due to the intense fire.

1989 Total Alarms: 210 ~ Chief Don Casavant

March 3<sup>rd</sup> - Kaman Aerospace - Thomas Road/Gilman - Structure Fire

Fire broke out in a paint booth. Fire was contained to the area immediate surrounding area.

October 24<sup>th</sup> - New Construction - Caroline Road - Structure Fire

Fire broke out in the laundry room due to the spontaneous combustion of rags with various chemicals on them. The fire was contained to the room.

1990 Total Alarms: 197 ~ Chief Don Casavant

May 21<sup>st</sup> - Kofkoff Egg Farm - Schwartz Road - Chicken Coop Fire

Mutual aid had to be called in from the following towns to assist with this fully involved chicken coop: Yantic, Colchester, Salem, East Great Plain, and Franklin.

June 27<sup>th</sup> - United Paper and Metal - Stockhouse Road - Person Stuck in a Paper Bailer

A person attempting to un-jam a paper bailer became stuck when the machine restarted. After an extensive extraction, the victim was Life-Stared to Hartford Hospital.

1991 Total Alarms: 198 ~ Chief Herb Burt

August 18<sup>th</sup> - Stand-by for Hurricane Bob - Town Wide

Numerous trees and wires down.

December 12<sup>th</sup> - Gager Homestead - Gager Road - Garage Fire

A 2-story garage containing old cars and machinery was found fully involved. Mutual aid was received from Yantic, Gardner Lake and East Great Plain.

1992 Total Alarms: 207 ~ Chief Herb Burt

October 27<sup>th</sup> - Juknis Residence - Fitchville Road - Cellar Fire

A water line burst helped to extinguish a fire that had broke out in the basement.

1993 Total Alarms: 231 ~ Chief Herb Burt

August 9<sup>th</sup> - Mutual Aid to Yantic - West Town Street - Structure Fire  
Assisted Yantic at the scene of a structure fire at a convalescent home.

1994 Total Alarms: 240 ~ Chief Tom Main

July 22<sup>nd</sup> - United Paper and Metal - Stockhouse Road - Structure Fire  
A passerby reported smoke and flames coming through the roof at the unoccupied office portion of the building. Mutual aid received from Franklin and Yantic.

1995 Total Alarms: 236 ~ Chief Tom Main

January 31<sup>st</sup> - Kaman Aerospace - Thomas Road/Gilman - Fuel Leak  
Approximately 500 - 1000 gallons of number 4 fuel oil leaked from its holding tank into the Yantic River and its surrounding area. Mutual aid was received from the Sub Base Fire Department, The Coast Guard, Yantic and Franklin.

1996 Total Alarms: 319 ~ Chief Tom Main

\*This was a 16-month period due to the change of the installation of officers.

June 18<sup>th</sup> - Route 2 East, Prior to Exit 23 - Motor Home Fire  
A motor home traveling on the highway had its brakes overheat, which ignited the trailer. Franklin and Yantic responded as mutual aid.

October 10<sup>th</sup> - Warm Valley Kennels - Peters Road - Structure Fire  
A grooming business attached to a residence was found fully involved. All animals were saved. Mutual aid from Salem, Oakdale, Gardner Lake, Colchester, Franklin, East Great Plain and Yantic. The building sustained substantial damage.

1997 Total Alarms: 249 ~ Chief Fred Potter

June 4<sup>th</sup> - Mutual Aid to Colchester - Broadway & Clark - Structure Fire  
A fully involved fabric store, located in an old mill building was lost.

June 4<sup>th</sup> - Mutual Aid to Colchester - Norwich Ave - Structure Fire  
An abandoned house was found fully involved. The build sustained major damage



June 4<sup>th</sup> - The Company responded to 5 calls.

1998 Total Alarms: 282 ~ Chief Fred Potter

April 6<sup>th</sup> - CJ's Restaurant - Salem Turnpike - Structure Fire

A fire that started in the kitchen area of the restaurant was contained.

Mutual aid was received from East Great Plain and Yantic.

July 6<sup>th</sup> - The Company responded to 5 calls.

1999 Total Alarms: 285 ~ Chief Fred Potter

February 18<sup>th</sup> - Cane Residence - Hough Road - Structure Fire

An unattended pot on the stove ignited the fire that did substantial damage to the structure. Mutual aid was received from Colchester, Salem, Gardner Lake, Franklin and Yantic.

February 27<sup>th</sup> - Route 2 East - Bus Rollover - Mass Casualty Incident

42 people were transported to area hospitals after a tour bus rolled over in the construction area of the highway. 2 people were seriously injured. The highway was shut down for several hours and mutual aid was received from all surrounding towns.

May 17<sup>th</sup> - Route 2 East - Explosive Truck Rollover -

Route 2 was shut down after a truck carrying explosives and bags of ammonium nitrate rolled over. The surrounding area was evacuated and the explosives unloaded. No major injuries.

